

“CUNNINGHAM MEMOIRS.”

No. IX.

ON THE FLINDERS PETRIE PAPYRI—II. BY REV. JOHN P. MAHAFFY, D.D.

(With Autotypes I. to XVIII.)

[Read JANUARY 11th, 1892.]

THERE are two moments in the deciphering of strange documents at which the explorer feels the high excitement of successful discovery, and on which he can look back with peculiar satisfaction. The first is when the general sense of a blurred and mutilated MS. suddenly flashes out upon him, as it were a guide-post to tell him the direction of his search, and an indication not only of what he ought to read, but of what he may supply, where the vestiges of the writing are faint, or where portions have been torn away. Without some index of this kind, deciphering must remain imperfect; for there are many faint traces of letters, by themselves illegible, which only attain their importance when the general sense has determined the character of the missing word. But if thus limited, both in sense and grammar, to some one of a very few forms, the remaining vestiges will at once show some of these to be impossible, and will generally agree with only one of the remaining solutions. Thus a word, by itself illegible, may be determined with certainty. But even after this advance has been made, there frequently remain isolated puzzles, which baffle the inquirer obstinately till a happy moment of inspiration, or the discussion of the problem with some kindred spirit, suddenly suggests

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the solution. This is the second moment of deep satisfaction, which indemnifies a scholar for long hours of apparently unsuccessful toil.

The great collection of Greek papyri recovered by Mr. Petrie—papyri much more ancient, and otherwise more valuable than any hitherto known (in that language)—afforded, and indeed still affords, an ample field for these intellectual delights. From the time that Mr. Sayce by his brilliant guesses determined the meaning of many of the fragments, and taught me the habit of deciphering, up to the present day, when my colleagues (especially Mr. Bury) often help me to overcome the remaining obstacles, the hope of solving further problems has been my task-master—my *εργοδιωκτης*—to use the expressive term of the papyri.

The mention of these two friends suggests to me another attractive feature in this sort of discovery. It is our frequent experience that two minds working together in discussion over a difficulty attain the solution that their isolated efforts, even when added together, could not reach. The resultant is in this case far greater than the sum of the separate forces. Thus, if Mr. Sayce were resident in this country, the present volume, to which he has contributed so much, should have appeared under our joint names. For had we worked together, the assignment of results to each would have been impossible. From the premisses suggested by the one, the other draws his conclusion; from the corrections of the one, the other avoids error, so that the solution when it comes is essentially a joint solution.

The documents herewith published are intended to supplement and illustrate those that appeared in my former Memoir, and also to give to the world the remainder of the Greek texts recovered by Mr. Petrie from the coffins of Gurob. When I say the remainder, I would not be understood to imply that every extant scrap is here printed; on the contrary, there are hundreds of fragments, many containing a few disjointed words, a few items from the middle of an account, the last or the opening formula of a document, which still lie in my possession, till Mr. Petrie has determined their home. Were these all to be printed, as such fragments are in the new *Catalogue* of the British Museum (cf. *British Museum Papyri* (1893), pp. 56–8, 159–61, and elsewhere), we should require several volumes of the

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present dimensions to contain them. My readers will, I hope, trust me that every reasonable effort has been made to bring together scattered portions of the same document, to print every connected text, and to publish everything which, however fragmentary, suggested any point of interest. While the present Memoir records many unexpected successes in this way, I fear that we have come almost to the limit of what is valuable in the collection. It is indeed possible, nay probable, that acute specialists, such as those of the British Museum, M. Revillout, or Professor Wilcken, if they wade through the mass of shreds and scraps, cleaned and separated from their envelope of clay by Mr. Petrie, Mr. Newberry, and by me, will still find correspondences which have escaped both me and Mr. Sayce—my early partner in this labour. But it may confidently be predicted that these future combinations will be few, and that the main results are now set before the world. The whole mass will, however, presently be put in some safe public place, where future inquirers can examine it, and nothing will gratify me more than to find this prophecy falsified.

A considerable number of the papyri in the present Memoir were first sorted, read, and ordered by Mr. Sayce independently, who then handed over to me the results of his labour. The greater part of his work he printed in *Hermathena*, No. xvii.; the rest he sent me in MS., and I have since repeatedly tested and verified his readings. The average result of my revision may be seen by comparing the texts in *Hermathena* with the corresponding versions in this Memoir. Though Mr. Sayce's work is stamped with that acuteness and brilliancy which he has displayed in so many fields, a longer and more patient study has enabled me to correct, supply, and complete many passages; I have united scattered parts of the same document, which he had deciphered separately; I have, moreover, added probably twice as many documents from the coffins which either Mr. Newberry or I took in pieces since Mr. Sayce's return to Egypt.

As regards the matter of the texts, I regret to say that with all diligence I have only been able to add some insignificant scraps to the classical literature so remarkable in the former Part. There are a few clauses of a narrative of the adventures of Heracles in Arcadia, known from Apollodoros (II. 7, § 3), which are chiefly valuable from the very archaic

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alphabet in which they are written. Of this alphabet I already have given specimens in the Table (col. 1) printed in Part I. The mutilated text is only of interest to palæographers. Then there are two blurred pieces of elegiac poetry, at one of which (XLIX. (1)) Mr. Bury and I, and then Professor Blass, have laboured most assiduously, but without satisfactory results. It may, however, suggest to some other scholar a restoration, and in any case will afford an ample field for conjecture. The second scrap (XLIX. (2)) is chiefly interesting for its form. Only the ends of one column and the openings of the next are preserved. But this is enough to show us that it was a collection or series of elegiac poems, each four lines in length, and each introduced by a heading, which seems to have opened with $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, and ended with the genitive case of a proper name. If this be the form of the heading, the names are not those of various poets, as I had at first suspected, but rather of the person who is the object of the epigrams—for such I suppose them to be. We have a collection of such poems by Callimachus, which do not adhere strictly to the four-line form, though it is the most common. But those on this papyrus are probably from an earlier hand, yet still surely a poet of the Hellenistic age. This curious glimpse at a new literary fact is marred by the jealous fate which has preserved only so much as makes our regrets counterbalance our satisfaction at the discovery.

The mass of documents, which may be called ephemeral, as opposed to classical—I mean writing intended for present use, and not for all time—is, on the other hand, so large and various, that any strict classification of it seems impossible. The readers of *Hermathena* will see what Mr. Sayce has done in that way; and I only regret that I have had no opportunity of attaining clearer views by fuller discussion with him on these points. There is, of course, a chronological order, which is obvious enough when the dates are affixed; but, on the one hand, many of our fragments have lost their dates, and, on the other, in letters of business, kindred subject-matter seems a more natural bond than the accident of synchronism. Were the dates widely sundered, the observance of their sequence would be imposed upon us, but with the exception of five isolated documents of Ptolemy Vth's day, recovered from at least two of the mummy cases,

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now numbered XLVI., and a very few from the earlier years of Ptolemy II. (some of them printed in Part I.), the whole collection of business papers comes, roughly speaking, from the 26th year of the 2nd to the 22nd of the 3rd king, i.e. 260–224, B.C. The fragments of Plato and Euripides may be considerably older. The differences in hands so proximate are not steps in the history of writing, but mere accidental variations among individuals. Yet if they represent but a single chapter, and that the first after mere lapidary writing, in the History of Greek Palæography, that chapter is rendered by the present Memoir so complete, that we can find no parallel for it in all the centuries down to late mediæval days. Such a mass of ancient everyday writing, as opposed to the methodical copying of classical texts or State documents, is not elsewhere to be found save in the *Graffiti* of Pompeii, and these latter are far less numerous and less various.

We may say of the documents before us, that they present a long series of gradations, from the most stately capital to the most fugitive scrawl, fully equal to those of any similar random collection of writing *and print* from a waste-paper basket of our own day. The three specimens of that minute and careful writing out of published and saleable books, which corresponds to our printing, differ as widely from the ephemeral hands as do our printed page from our friends' epistles which come by the post. This broad and indisputable result of Mr. Petrie's discovery is well worth insisting upon, not only by reason of its importance to palæography, but because it proves clearly how long-established and widely spread was the practice of writing in Hellenistic lands at that date. Seeing that our oldest dated writings are perhaps the most cursive, I feel that not only Euripides, but even Æschylus, must have written down his plays with the same facility that Shakspeare did.

Returning to the test of subject-matter as a principle of arrangement, we can help out the difficulties arising from variety and vagueness by another ground of division. Many of the documents are addressed to public officers, whose names recur not only in the heading, but on the back of the papyrus. It seemed obvious to group together, as Mr. Sayce had done, the letters addressed to the same official.

Of these officials the most prominent, accidentally, in the collection is Kleon *the architect*.^{*} The proper equivalent for this title seems rather to be *Commissioner of Works*, for his official correspondence shows that he controlled not only public buildings, but quarries, bridges, and the making of canals. He appears even to have had the power of assessing taxes for these purposes. He must have had his office in Crocodilopolis; and the fact that several letters to him from divers people are in the same hand, shows that he kept official copies, whereas others, from their very incorrectness, betray the unpractised writing of the actual correspondents. As the workmen employed in the quarries were Egyptians, they probably had their complaints written for them by a Greek scribe, of low degree. The workmen, ranged under decurions, some of whom are named in (2), were evidently not slaves (who are mentioned separately), but rather free-men compelled to give a certain *corvée* of labour to the State. Their complaints of unfairness in the distribution of these burdens are not met with autocratic refusal, but with official delays, and redress is recommended by the local officers. One of these is called by the LXX name for *taskmaster* (εργοδιωκτης).

It appears from this group of letters that the Egyptians were only bound to give labour (of which the tale was checked by officers called the *εγμερηται* before the workmen could return home) whereas they were supplied with food, water, and tools by the State. Several of the complaints tell us that these supplies were retarded, or not punctually distributed, and so the works and the working-time of the operatives were unduly protracted.

By some accident a large consignment of these papers, separated and pressed by Mr. Newberry, were kept in London till September, 1892, when I first learned of their existence by having them brought to me at the Oriental Congress of that year. My former Memoir was already long printed, and even of the present one some sheets struck off, when I undertook the examination of this new treasure, the last to be hoped for from the cemetery of Gurob. It at once became plain that the Autotypes to this volume, limited as they must be in number, would

^{*}Almost all the papers of coffin A are from this correspondence. But many scraps were scattered through other cases.

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gain immensely in value by withdrawing some of the specimens already selected, and stated to be autotyped in the early sheets (then already struck off), and by substituting better and more various examples. The correct list is given in front of the portfolio of autotypes. The reader will pardon the list of *errata* occasioned by this change of plan, which was adopted (at the sacrifice of consistency) for his benefit. It soon appeared that many of the fragments supplied gaps in those previously deciphered. It is a further discovery of interest that, of the three additional letters in the great hand autotyped in Part I. xxx. (1), two contain the name of the writer, Philonides, and one of them on the back Κλεωνι, proving that the writer was a son of Kleon, and probably elder brother of the Polykrates, whose equally fine hand stands out (xi. 1, Autotype) among the illegible scrawls of other writers. From the letters of the new consignment we learn many more details of the multifarious duties of the veteran Commissioner, whose duration of office we can now extend from the 27th to the 32nd year of the 2nd Ptolemy. I say veteran, because we have evidence from an affectionate letter of his son Philonides (xiii. 19) that he was old and anxious to be relieved; we have even the name of his assistant, Theodoros, and perhaps (xlii. (a)) his formal appointment to succeed Kleon. One document, written in a shaky hand, seems to be Kleon's own writing (xlii. (b)). The letters even point to a difference of character in the two young men, Philonides being more affectionate and concerned for his father, while Polykrates is intent upon his own affairs.

A higher title, but one less frequently represented in these documents, is that of Strategus, a military governor of the province.* The *Epi-strategus*, or chief of this department at Alexandria, was one of the highest officers of State. Three local strategi at least are made known to us: Aphthonetos, Diophanes, and Aristomachos. The first was governor in the 6th year of the 3rd Ptolemy (241 B. C.). We cannot say how long his

* It has been shown by Lumbroso that the military signification of this title was probably gone, and that he was merely an official with civil duties. It appears, moreover, from the British Museum Papyri (cf. No. xlii., with all the petitions of the Twins for pensions, at the opening of the *Catalogue*) that while the διοικητης settled financial quarrels, the Strategus had the charge of criminal business.

office lasted. The most important of the papers bearing his name is one which was autotyped in Part I. of this Memoir (Autotype XXVI.). A large part of the remainder I since found, and fitted to the previously known part, so that we can now read a tolerably complete and very curious minute concerning the billeting of State officials in Crocodilopolis, and the use of the royal emblem to mark crown property throughout Egypt. With the aid of the Rosetta Inscription, which describes minutely the "armorial bearings" of a new king, and directs that they shall be set up on all the temples in Egypt, I have offered an interpretation of this curious document which will, I trust, find acceptance.

The date of the correspondence of Diophanes raises an interesting question. Year 25 is just within the possible limits of Ptolemy (III.) Euergetes' reign, for there is now evidence that he began his 26th year of sovereignty.* But the non-occurrence of any body of documents later than the wills of his 22nd year, and the general likeness to the papers of Kleon, make it practically certain that we are dealing with the reign of the 2nd Ptolemy, viz. 260 B.C. So early a date for fugitive everyday documents is startling enough; I trust further corroboration will be found from the occurrence (on the back of II. 2) of a double date in Macedonian and Egyptian months.† Here Apellæus 10 corresponds to Pharmouthi 16, which differs widely from the correspondences given in either the Canopus or the Rosetta Inscription. The reader will find these dates discussed in Part I. of this Memoir, pp. 68–9. If the variation between the Macedonian and Egyptian months were an undisturbedly progressive one, the law could easily be ascertained, but the intercalation of months and days, and the rectification of a defective calendar by cycles, at the end of which the months were forcibly accommodated to the seasons—these possibilities make the problem so complicated that it seems to me insoluble. Yet I trust that some scholar who is also an astronomer or scientific chronographer

* I infer this from documents quoted below, p. 37, which mention a tax of the year 26, followed by a tax of year 2. This points to the new king's first year as the remainder of Euergetes' year 26. For taxing purposes the accession need not be noticed.

† Leemans (Leyden Pap. i. p. 19) has collected the instances known up to the date of his publication (1843). (Cf. also the curious date discussed on xxiv., p. [71].)

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may be tempted to examine its conditions. The single fragment (30) which mentions Aristomachus has no date.

Phaies, the royal steward (*οικονομος*), is another distinct personage, to whom the two letters x, (1) and (2), are addressed. They are in remarkably large and handsome, though not easy, writing, and as one of them is surely the autograph of his official, we may conclude that the other, the complaint of the goose-herds, if it be indeed in the same hand, is a copy made by him for Phaies' office. Very old Egyptian wall paintings show us that even the artificial fattening of geese was of immense antiquity. Diodorus tells us (I. 70) that the king's diet was restricted, as regards flesh, to veal and goose, a diet which would make even royalty intolerable to most of us. This document, as Mr. Sayce observes, first teaches us that it was carried on for the Royal Household by official people. But the epithet Royal (our Crown) appears in so many various relations of life, that we can see plainly how thoroughly Egypt was a monarchical bureaucracy. The king's name comes in everywhere; officials do the work.

The title *οικονομος* (Crown Steward) occurs several times, and always in connexion with one of the three *μεριδες* of the nome, for each of which we find a different steward named. He was apparently of lower rank than the *διοικητης*, who seems to have controlled the finances generally.* On the other hand, the *γραμματευς*, called the Royal Secretary, seems to have been a great person, to judge from the indications we have of Asklepiades, who, according to Autotype XVI. (2) in the former Part, was in office in the 18th year of Ptolemy III.

In the papyri already known, the title *επιστατης* (of a temple) is frequent, and that of *διοικητης* rare,† but then the *διοικητης* hitherto known was a great officer in Alexandria, a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The title in these Petrie papers is apparently applied to a local (though the chief financial)

* I do not agree with the editor of the British Museum Papyri, who translates (p. 13) *διοικητης*, *governor* of Memphis, and says his relation to the *στρατηγος* is not clear. Of course the title *αρχισωματοφυλαξ*, there given to the *διοικητης*, is merely honorary. This criticism also applies to his note on p. 42 of that publication.

† The principal official concerned with the petitions of Ptolemy son of Glaucias, and the Twins at Memphis, was a *υποδιοικητης*.

officer, who probably reported to the central bureau. Another personage frequently mentioned in the following papers is the *επιμελητης*, whom Revillout considers a financial officer under the *διοικητης*.

Remarkable, too, is the absence of ceremonious titles in the present collection. There is not a single occurrence of the so-called friends, or cousins, or aide-de-camps of the king, as the Macedonian peers or high officials are frequently called in the Turin, London, and Paris Papyri. Is it that the habit of dispensing these titles had not yet come into fashion at so early a date, or was as yet restricted to the *grandees* of Alexandria? Surely the Strategus of so great a nome as the Arsinoite must have been a great person, and probably sent down from the capital; and yet, under the 7th and 8th Ptolemies, the chief financial officer of Memphis, who must have been as important as the Controller of Crocodilopolis,* is only a *υποδιοικητης*.

But the complete absence of these honorific titles in the Arsinoite Papyri of the third century, and their systematic occurrence in the Diospolite Papyri of the second—not a century apart—seem to me to point to something more than a gradual growth in officialdom. It is surely more important than the growth of Lord Mayors out of Mayors in our own day. May it not point to some considerable bureaucratic reform, forced upon the Crown by the intestine conflicts of the 4th and 5th reigns—conflicts expressly attested by both Polybius and the Rosetta inscription? The local officers may have been the main support of the crown in these troublous times, and may therefore have insisted upon equality in rank with the Alexandrian *grandees*, who had hitherto monopolised all the dignities, and had not weathered the storm of insurrection in the provinces. Hence under the 7th and 8th Ptolemies the local governors are all peers with Court titles, whereas under the 2nd and 3rd they had been mere ordinary officials. If this conjecture be verified, it points to a new fact in Ptolemaic history.

The over-frequent recurrence of the same names makes all inferences of identification unsafe without further details. Indeed, as far as

* Lumbroso has endeavoured to show (*Econ. pol. des Lagides*, p. 347) the hierarchy of office by the apparent promotion of the same official in succeeding years.